

Northeast Laboratory Services Implements TEMPO® to Improve Operational Efficiency

Case Study
Northeast Labs





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Context

- Northeast Laboratory Services (NEL) is an ISO:IEC 17025-accredited operation located in Portland, ME. The firm specializes in contact laboratory services centered on residential testing, environmental chemistry, food and water testing, indoor air quality, and media manufacturing.

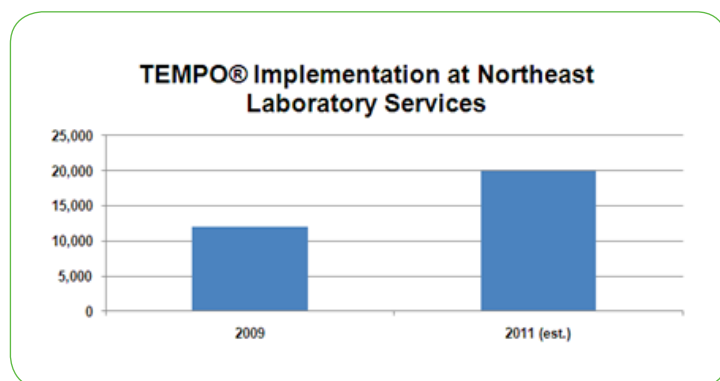
Objectives & Action

- In early 2009, NEL management wanted to improve laboratory throughput to meet increased demand for routine microbiology testing and pathogen analysis of food samples. The NEL team agreed that the best approach was to replace manual plate and Petrifilm counting methods with an automated solution for quality indicator testing. Their Objective: to explore automated techniques that would enable the lab to (a) reduce the amount of technician time spent counting colonies, (b) minimize labor associated with making related media, and (c) increase testing capacity.

After meeting with representatives from bioMérieux in March 2009, NEL management decided to implement the TEMPO® solution for the following routine parameters: Total Aerobic Count, Yeast and Molds, Coliforms, Escherichia coli, Coagulase Positive Staph aureus, and Lactic Acid Bacteria. The bioMérieux team installed a TEMPO system and trained NEL staff in June 2009.

Key Results

- After a three-month implementation period, NEL converted an average of 2,400 tests per month to the TEMPO solution on a majority of food matrices tested, which included seafood, dairy, and RTE products. By the end of 2009, NEL converted nearly 13,000 quality indicator tests from the Petrifilm method to the TEMPO solution and are on pace to transfer 20,000 tests by the end of 2011. As a result of implementing the automated TEMPO solution, NEL was able to reduce reading time by 40%, which allows the team to focus on other value-added activities



“One of the real benefits of implementing TEMPO® is that it eliminates the need to make agar, which for an accredited laboratory requires significant time and quality control. Also, we do not have to count colonies as we did with Petrifilms. We just put the TEMPO® cards in the reader, push a button, and walk away to do something more value-added.”

*– Kate Callnan, Technical Director,
Northeast Laboratory Services*